



PACIFIC ISLANDS TUNA
INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- **2012 INFOFISH**
- **PITIA/WWF WHALE DEPREDATION PROJECT**
- **INTRODUCTION OF INDUSTRY MCS ROLE**
- **ANOTHER LOOK AT SOUTHERN ALBACORE**
- **DEVFISH II STEERING COMMITTEE MEETS**

Pacific Tuna Watch

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12th INFOFISH Exhibits in Bangkok

Chairman of PITIA, Charles Hufflett attended the Inforfish conference held from May 23rd – 25th under the invitation and sponsorship of the FFA/DevFish. Pete Celso, Vice Chair and Adrian Wickham, Director of PITIA were also there under their own company auspices.

Pete Celso presented a paper "Is Papua New Guinea a threat to the European Union Canning Industry" which basically proposed collaboration between the PNG and EU as a way forward. It also emphasised the change in dynamics of the Pacific Tuna Industry as the PIC's take more effective control and participation in the Tuna Fishery. This was much the theme of a PNA paper presented later in the conference. Both papers offered participation rather than confrontation with the new and old orders of the Pacific Industry.

based agenda this year than in previous INFOFISH conferences.

As with all conferences of this type it is a meeting place of Industry and activity within the margins is often as important as the conference itself. The emphasis of INFOFISH is more toward the Cannery market although there was a broader Pole and Line fishing occupied four separate papers in its own session. This included a presentation from the "International Pole and Line Foundation" (IPNLF) which is recently formed London based organisation. Listening to the presenters one would have thought that Pole and Line fishing was some new technique and that, by courtesy of various eNGO's, the Pacific was about to be enlightened into a new nirvana. The economics of Pole and Line fishing were brushed over and it was naturally assumed (by the presenters) that the market would meet the additional cost and price associated with this method. All appeared unaware of previous Pacific forays into Pole and Line fishing - the history of which will certainly dampen interest in future investment by the actual fishery risk takers.

Concern over excess fishing capacity in the Pacific was a continuing theme in many of the papers including those of Akira Nakamae President of the Japan Far Seas Purse Seine Fishing Association. Nakamae was at pains to point out that Japan had contained its fleet numbers whilst others had expanded fleets exponentially.

Sustainability was a popular buzz word but little substantial discussion was held on the issue. ISSF were vociferous on sustainability issues as they relate particularly to the canning market. Given their shareholder and support base they are somewhat detached from the longline and domestic Pacific fisheries. This could well result in edits and pronouncements

that do not fit well with the smaller vessel and business enterprises.

Many presenters gave coverage to a total ban on "at sea transshipments". This primarily in the High Seas areas and as a general rule SID's would be supportive of such measure. It will be necessary, however, to define precisely what is intended by "at sea" transshipments as the controlled transferring of tuna at sea is a feature in many domestic fisheries. This is particularly so in the "fresh" fishery. The intent of a ban on transshipments is, of course directed toward carrier vessels taking tuna out of the area. Care will have to be exercised in setting any regulation to ensure the domestic fisheries are protected.

The influence of the Pacific region as the World's largest source of Tuna was clear and emphasised throughout the conference. The paper by Glenn Hurry on the effectiveness of the newest RFMO the WCPFC and "what will the next 5-10 years look like" could have taken more debate from the floor. Clearly the role of WCPFC is pivotal in

INFO Fish 2012 con't

maintaining the economic viability of the Industry. Again, as in other papers, the rapid rise of the Purse Seine fleet over the last decade featured in the paper.

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The session on eco labels and its influence in the market place ended up with a spat between some of the individual participants. The audience was frankly less than impressed. The confusion caused by so many labels in the market must negate the value in the process as far as the consumer is concerned. Whilst this session provided some excitement clearly there needs to be some rationalisation in the eco label business!

As an addition to the conference programme the Global Environment Facility (GEF)/FAO held a session on "Global sustainable fisheries management in areas beyond national jurisdictions". Given the extensive High Seas pockets within the WCPFC convention area this work is of obvious interest to SID's.

Proposals for Electronic monitoring instead of observers featured as well as work on a Pan Pacific Shark Action Plan for IATTC/WCPFC.

INFOFISH is a unique mix of Commerce, Industry, Regulators, NGO's, and Trade Associations which makes for a very broad based conference. The common theme with all INFOFISH conferences must be that those selling tuna think the price is too low – those buying consider it too high!

PITIA takes another look at Southern Albacore

After its press statement of concern last year over the rapid increase on albacore catches in the Southern Longline fishery, the Chairman presented another paper to the FFC Sub-Committee on South Pacific Tuna and Billfish.

The paper talked to utilizing Maximum Sustainable Yield (MEY) as a target for the management of the fishery. The paper also raised concern over subsidies that was afforded to other fleets in the fishery that the Pacific Domestic vessels were not.

The fuel survey that PITIA had conducted was also presented to the meeting for information. The Sub-committee welcomed this information and the paper and factored this into their work.

PITIA introduces industry role in Monitoring and Surveillance

At the Annual Meeting of the FFA Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) PITIA presented a paper that introduced a possible role that the industry could play to assist in Monitoring and Surveillance.

For the legitimate fisherman Illegal, unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing undermines the value of the fishery, and could play a proactive role to assist enforcers of the Pacific to prevent, deter and eliminate this problem.

The paper talked to a public list of legitimately licensed vessels in the Pacific and their geographical area where they hold a permit so that industry would be able to

report on vessels and suspicious sightings.

The paper also talked about an appropriate reporting center to which these reports could be made, and which could if necessary action..

The second area this paper presented on was the major role that a Catch Documentation Scheme specific to this part of the world could play MCS efforts.

The paper was received well by MCS Operators of the FFA membership and because a part of the recommendation that went from this working group to the Forum Fisheries Council

FFC 2012 visits Nuku'alofa

The Annual Session of the Forum Fisheries Council was held in Nuku'alofa from the 14th to the 18th of May.

The session looked at recommendations from the Secretariat on the priorities of the membership from Management, Development and Operations.

The Council looked as took a strategic look at its priorities to the work of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission and how to utilize the process be

tween now and the annual session to achieve these priorities.

The Niue Treaty is at its final stages of development which is meant to bring together the resources of the FFA membership in an effort to collaborate over the battle against IUU.

At the end of the session FFC also looked a new approach to conducting the FFA Fisheries Ministers meeting that will also take place in Nuku'alofa at the end of June.

Whale Depredation and Incidental By-catch

Those in the surface long-line Industry will be well familiar with increasing incidents where whales are taking the catch off the lines and occasionally being hooked themselves. This is a major problem in Fiji, Samoa, Cooks, Tonga and Vanuatu.

Whilst no definitive figures are available preliminary estimates in Fiji put the loss in catch at about 7% annually. The exact numbers of whales caught and released alive is also unknown. Fishers have tried numerous techniques over the years to reduce interactions with varying degrees of success. The apparent increase in whale population is also exasperating the situation.

At the time of the PITIA workshop in Nadi June 2010 the issue was discussed with the South Pacific office of WWF and joint 'seed' funding was agreed to investigate mitigation

methods. The preliminary work being funded through the GEF Offshore Fisheries Management Project. At the same time work was being undertaken in the Coral Sea by the Australian Marine Mammal Centre (AMMC). AMMC is a division of the Australia Antarctic Division and based in Tasmania. AMMC have been honing their skills in whale mitigation based on similar problems in the sub Antarctic. The Australian work involved the use of Physical Depredation Mitigation Devices (PDMD's). In simple terms PDMD's comprise of a wire "shroud" or light chain which is triggered when a Tuna takes the hook. The shroud or chain provides a "curtain" round the hooked tuna acting a deterrent to whales seeking an easy feed!

With additional funding from Australia and the DevFish II Project trials were conducted in Fiji during November and December 2011. The result of this work and that of the

Coral Sea can be found at; <http://www.marinemammals.gov.au/regional-initiatives/depredation-project>.

The latest update on this website (number 10) specifically refers to the trials in Fiji and the Coral Sea. These trials involved the setting of almost 50,000 hooks in a controlled environment. Whilst the trials were not conclusive and very much "work in progress" those involved at sea in Fiji support continued effort to prove the efficacy of PDMD's. There is general confidence that PDMD's have a more than a reasonable chance of providing a solution to what is already a major problem.

Subject to funds being available it is hoped to conduct further trials in Fiji in November/December 2012. These will involve the setting of some 100,000 hooks and the use of further modified PDMD's. The AMMC have already offered generous

practical and financial support. There is still a shortfall in the total required and additional funds are being sort.

PITIA wishes to thank the generous donors to date and acknowledge the work of the skippers and crews of the Fiji Tuna Boat Owners Association (FTBOA) who undertook the Fiji trials. Derek Hamer from AMMC was the project leader and co-author of the report. Derek spent the entire time at sea during the Fiji trials and his affinity with the crews was a key factor in the success of the initial trials.

PITIA will provide further updates on the extended trials as they come to hand. If further information is required please contact the Secretariat directly at secretarat@pacificunaindustry.com

DevFish II Regional Steering Committee Meets to review activities of past year

The Regional Steering Committee for the DevFish II project met prior to FFC Officials in Nuku'alofa to review activities under the project in the past year. Moses Amos of Vanuatu was nominated as the chair of the meeting.

Hugh Walton, DevFish II Team Leader presented the activities completed in the past year and what is on-going under the different components of the project.

PITIA and related activities are supported through the first component of the DevFish II Project on Tuna Industry Development activity 2 on Improving Transparency in Systems and Procedures.

PITIA was represented at the meeting by the Chairman, Charles Hufflett, Adrian Wickham, Director from the Solomon Islands and the Secretariat.

The Committee generally acknowledged the flexibility in the project process in both its support to both national and sub-regional efforts in both the industry development aspect as well as its second component on Detering IUU fishing in this region.

PITIA thanked the Project and FFA for its continued support to both PITIA as an organization and individual country initiatives.